

Department of Conservation  
Briefing to the Incoming  
Minister for Biosecurity

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Front cover image: DOC's Melanie Newfield with the invasive water weed hornwort.

*Photo: The Nelson Mail*

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# Key Messages

New Zealand's unique biodiversity is highly vulnerable to the impacts of exotic animal pests, weeds and diseases. Introduced pests are the single biggest threat to New Zealand's remaining indigenous biodiversity, and increased travel and trade is placing greater pressure on existing biosecurity systems.

The biosecurity area still lacks an overall strategy and is characterised by overlapping and unclear management roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. While agency co-ordination has improved through the establishment of a Biosecurity portfolio and initiatives such as memoranda of understanding between biosecurity agencies, the lack of an overall strategy remains a major weakness.

A key issue for any strategy to address is ensuring that risks to indigenous flora and fauna are given proper weighting in all decisions, from setting border measures to responding to new exotic pests and in managing established weeds and animal pests through pest management strategies.

The roles and responsibilities of central and local government, landowners and industry for managing pests after they have entered the country still need clarification in the area of internal biosecurity and pest management.

# Introduction

Naumai haere mai. Welcome to the Department of Conservation.

The department has responsibility for overseeing the management of 30% of New Zealand's land area, protection of the nation's native plant and animal life, marine areas and nationally important historic heritage.

New Zealand's unique biodiversity is highly vulnerable to the impacts of exotic animal pests, weeds and diseases. The department puts considerable effort into managing introduced weeds and animal pests (\$6.8 million a year), which are the single biggest threat to New Zealand's remaining indigenous biodiversity. Effective biosecurity systems that exclude or eradicate these threats are essential if efforts to turn the tide of biodiversity decline are to be successful.

The department is one of four central government agencies with an operational biosecurity role, funded through Vote Biosecurity and reporting directly to you.

This briefing paper gives you an overview of the strategic issues facing the department in carrying out our biosecurity role in the terrestrial and freshwater environments, as well as a broad introduction to the department. We have worked with the Ministry of Fisheries in preparing a joint briefing for you on marine biosecurity, and also had input into the biosecurity section of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's briefing.

Part I sets out:

- Background information on the department's biosecurity role;
- Strategic directions for the department in the biosecurity area;
- Key issues for the department in the development of a New Zealand Biosecurity Strategy; and
- Immediate issues.

Part II sets out some general information about the department, including:

- Statutory mandate and key functions;
- Structure; and
- A profile of the Director-General, General Managers, and Chief Technical Officer, Biosecurity.



Hugh Logan

DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF CONSERVATION

A photograph of a lush, green forest. In the background, a waterfall cascades down a rocky ledge. The foreground is filled with dense, vibrant green foliage, including various trees and bushes. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day, and the overall scene is a natural, scenic view.

## Part 1

# Strategic Overview

## A THE DEPARTMENT'S BIOSECURITY ROLE

Four central government agencies work together to implement the Government's biosecurity programme. The programme covers a wide range of activities including pre-border and border controls, surveillance, incursion response and pest management.

Our main role in border biosecurity is to provide advice and support to the lead biosecurity agencies, the Ministry of Fisheries (MAF) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MFish), as well as operational support in the event of an incursion response. We also provide advice to the Environmental Risk Management Authority on new organism applications submitted under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act, and to the Biosecurity Council and the Biosecurity Technical Forum on risks to indigenous flora and fauna.

MAF has the lead role for terrestrial and freshwater biosecurity, including risk assessment and standard setting and border inspection. MAF also has responsibility for initial incursion responses against all new terrestrial and freshwater exotic pests and diseases (excluding mosquitoes which are managed by the Ministry of Health), including those that are a conservation threat. MFish has a similar lead role for the marine environment. Memoranda of understanding have been signed between the four biosecurity agencies, which help clarify respective roles and responsibilities for border biosecurity and incursion response.

As a key biosecurity agency, we also contribute fully to the development of biosecurity policy, and has input to standards and measures to ensure that risks to indigenous flora and fauna are considered.



DOC officer Mike McGlynn holds a giant koi carp from Northland.

Photo: Shelly Clendenon/DOC

Responsibility for ongoing incursion response and for managing pests that become established in New Zealand is determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the nature of the threat posed by the organism, the agencies' skills and expertise, and other factors. We may take a lead role for unwanted organisms and pests that are solely a threat to conservation. Our main operational focus is on pest management and internal biosecurity through managing organisms that have become established in New Zealand.

Since the Biosecurity portfolio was established in 1997, the department has undertaken significant incursion responses against rainbow lorikeet, pest fish (Koi Carp and *Gambusia*), the exotic seaweed *Undaria*, and the invasive aquatic weed Hornwort. We have also instigated research and undertaken operational activities for managing the chytrid fungus, a disease affecting native frogs.

The department has provided technical and policy input into incursion responses led by other agencies, including the Southern Salt Marsh Mosquito (Ministry of Health led) and the Painted Apple Moth and Red Imported Fire Ant (MAF led).

We are also funded under Vote Biosecurity to meet its obligations as a landowner to control mainly agricultural weeds and pests under Regional Councils' Pest Management Strategies.

## B STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT

The department's *Statement of Intent, 2002-2005* sets out seven key steps that the department will take towards fulfilling its conservation responsibilities. Key Step 2, *Minimise Biosecurity Risks*, sets out the priority outcomes and strategic directions for the department in relation to biosecurity.

The national priority outcomes for biosecurity are:

- Prevent the entry and establishment of new exotic unwanted organisms; and
- Eradicate or contain unwanted organisms that are newly established or are already established but not yet widespread.

The main focus of the first national priority outcome is on providing advice to the lead biosecurity agencies (MAF and MFish) responsible for developing and implementing border controls and incursion responses.

The main focus for the second priority outcome is on the department's own systems and capabilities to allow early identification and response to pests and unwanted organisms that pose a threat to native species.

The department has developed outcome indicators for reporting against each of these national priority outcomes.



## C KEY ISSUES FOR A BIOSECURITY STRATEGY

The *New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy*, approved in February 2000 along with a \$187 million five-year funding package, gives a clear strategic direction and framework for halting the decline of New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity. The area of biosecurity, however, lacks such an overall strategy and is characterised by overlapping and unclear management roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. Agency co-ordination and biosecurity policy development have been much improved through the establishment of a biosecurity portfolio and Biosecurity Council in 1997, and initiatives such as the memoranda of understanding between biosecurity agencies. The lack of an overall strategy, however, is a major weakness.

Increasing travel and trade is placing greater pressure on existing biosecurity systems and there is general agreement that the historically narrow focus on protecting agriculture and trade must be broadened to address risks to native species and ecosystems.

Development of a New Zealand Biosecurity Strategy is therefore being funded as a priority action under the *New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy*. The development of a Strategy is the single most important policy initiative underway in the biosecurity sector. From our perspective, we are looking for a Strategy to provide:

- an agreed vision, goals and objectives that reflect the importance of biosecurity for protection of indigenous flora and fauna;
- clear roles, responsibilities and governance for border biosecurity and pest management;
- a risk management framework that takes into account risks to indigenous flora and fauna at all decision-making steps; and
- direction on the required capabilities and resourcing to deliver on the strategy.

A key objective for the department is to ensure that risks to indigenous flora and fauna are given proper weighting in all decisions, from setting border measures to responding to new exotic pests, and in managing established weeds and animal pests through pest management strategies. This is particularly important at the border, where the department does not have the capability itself to put systems in place or mount responses and instead relies on the lead biosecurity agencies, MAF and MFish to take action. An agreed risk management framework needs to be applied consistently to ensure that decisions are transparent, based on the best available information and recognising where there is uncertainty, and delivering an appropriate level of protection.

Another key area that a Strategy must address is the area of internal biosecurity and pest management. Roles and responsibilities of central and local government, landowners, and industry for managing pests after they enter are unclear. This can result in management of particular pests falling through the gaps.

Pest and weed control under regional council pest management strategies, mainly agricultural weeds and pests, is the main operational focus for our biosecurity work. We are currently developing our capability in this area, by training staff and developing policies and standard operating procedures. Approximately 90% of our biosecurity budget is spent on supporting regional pest management strategies, and this leaves little for provision of advice, undertaking operational responses and surveillance, training staff and increasing staff awareness, and research. It is expected that capability and resourcing needs of agencies will be identified in the Strategy.

We are also seeking to clarify any ambiguity over what is biosecurity work (funded under Vote: Biosecurity through the Minister for Biosecurity), and what is biodiversity work (funded under Vote: Conservation through the Minister of Conservation). Much pest and weed control work could be considered under either budget and this creates confusion when evaluating funding options for incursion responses.

## **Immediate Issues**

### ***Painted Apple Moth***

MAF has been directed to report back to the first Cabinet meeting of the new Government on the future management of the Painted Apple Moth. The key decision is whether to continue with eradication efforts or move to a long-term management programme. The factors that need to be considered are the likely economic, environmental and health impacts resulting from the spread of the Painted Apple Moth, the costs and benefits of eradication and management, and the likely effectiveness of each option.

The department, MAF and the Ministry of Research Science and Technology agree that there is evidence of potential impact to the conservation estate, that eradication is feasible and that there is a medium-high chance of eradication succeeding. There is disagreement, however, surrounding the severity of the impact likely to be observed and the estimated economic impacts to New Zealand of establishment. The department has taken a preferred position of eradication based on the preliminary results of laboratory host testing, and observations in the field which suggest karaka, kowhai, mangrove, ribbonwood and native broom species will be the most severely affected native plants. MAF has recommended a preferred position of long-term management.

### ***Yellow Flower Wasp***

The yellow flower wasp was first identified in Northland in 2000. Previously managed by MAF, the response for this species has recently been picked up by the department. The wasp does not present a human health hazard, but may present a conservation threat as females parasitise large beetles. While the impacts on native biota are not yet confirmed, the potential impact and the limited distribution of the wasp to three sites in Northland led to the recommendation by the Technical Advisory Group, that eradication should be attempted. Funding was unsuccessfully sought for this work in 2002/03 and we will consider whether funding should again be sought for the 2003/04 year.

### ***Hornwort***

Hornwort is a serious aquatic weed established in the North Island. Since its introduction into New Zealand it has had significant impacts on environmental and recreational values in freshwater systems, and has cost the hydro-electric power industry millions of dollars. In early 2002, it was discovered for the first time in the South Island at one site in Marlborough. We have undertaken an initial response and are in the process of evaluating possible options for eradication or control.

A scenic view of a mountain range with snow patches and a stone cottage in the foreground. The mountains are rugged and covered in snow, with a clear blue sky above. The foreground shows a stone cottage with a corrugated metal roof, situated on a grassy slope. The overall scene is a high-altitude, mountainous landscape.

## Part 2

# The Department of Conservation

Stone Cottage at Two Mile Stream,  
South Wye Valley, Hector Mountains,  
Central Otago.  
*Photo: Neill Simpson*

## A BACKGROUND

The Department of Conservation was set up in 1987. The department inherited the conservation functions of the Department of Lands and Survey, New Zealand Forest Service, New Zealand Wildlife Service, as well as responsibility for management of the foreshore, lakes and rivers from the Ministry of Transport, and management of marine mammals from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The department was also given the job of advocacy for conservation and an expanded effort to protect coastal and marine environments. The department is responsible for the management of historic heritage sites on lands that we administer.

At inception, the department was described as a “mud on the boots” organisation, with responsibilities for threatened species, about one-third of the nation’s land area, marine areas, and historic places. Our operational work includes everything from fire fighting, kakapo recovery programmes, building and maintaining tracks, huts and toilets in national parks, management of sub-Antarctic islands, and pest control through to negotiating covenants for protection on private land.

## B STATUTORY MANDATE AND KEY FUNCTIONS

We are the central government agency responsible for the conservation of New Zealand's natural and historic heritage.

Our functions, as set out in the Conservation Act, are to:

- Manage land and other natural and historic resources;
- Preserve as far as practicable all indigenous freshwater fisheries, protect recreational fisheries and freshwater habitats;
- Advocate conservation of natural and historic resources;
- Promote the benefits of conservation (including Antarctica and internationally);
- Provide conservation information; and
- Foster recreation and allow tourism, to the extent that use is not inconsistent with the conservation of any natural or historic resource.

The department has statutory responsibility under a wide range of other legislation, including the National Parks Act, the Reserves Act, the Wildlife Act, the Marine Reserves Act, the Marine Mammals Protection Act, and the Wild Animal Control Act.

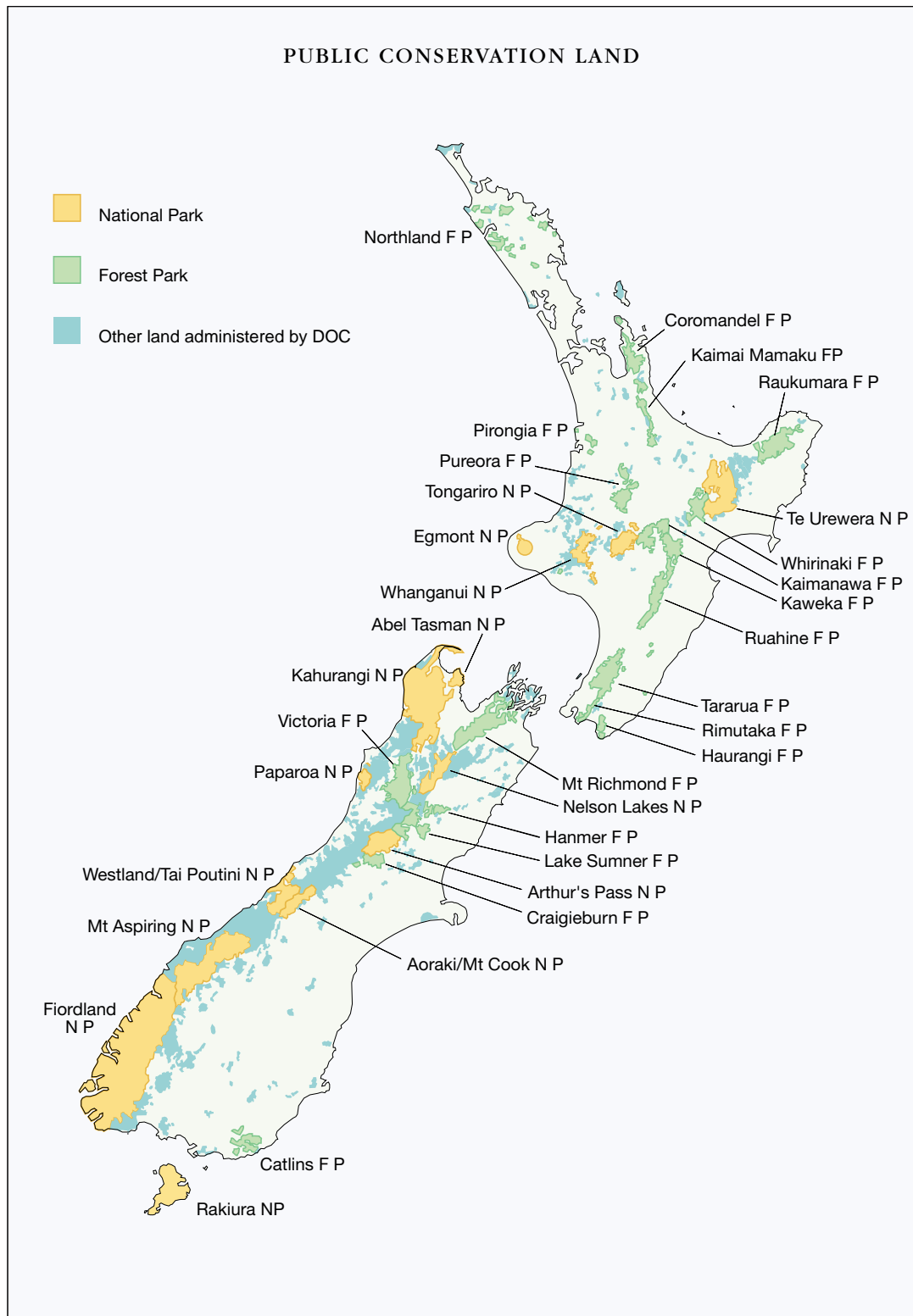
We also contribute to the conservation and sustainable management of natural and historic heritage in areas for which we are not directly responsible, through our roles under other statutes including the Resource Management Act, the Fisheries Acts, the Biosecurity Act, the Forest and Rural Fires Act, and the Crown Pastoral Land Act.

Conservation management and the work of the department is characterised by a high level of public input, and on the concept that conservation land is the common heritage of all New Zealanders. These principles are inherent in all conservation legislation. The Conservation Act establishes a hierarchy of conservation boards and the New Zealand Conservation Authority, an independent body appointed by the Minister of Conservation. The Authority approves management plans that bind the department.

## C STRUCTURE

The department manages almost one-third of New Zealand's landmass: about eight million hectares held in 14 national parks, twenty conservation parks and about 3,500 reserves and other categories of protected land. In the marine environment, we manage almost 7% of the territorial sea (less than 1% of the area within the Exclusive Economic Zone): 1.1 million hectares have additional protection in 16 marine reserves, two marine mammal sanctuaries, two marine parks and one specially protected area. The map in figure 1 shows the land entrusted to the department.

*Figure 1: Map of land managed by the Department of Conservation*



The nature of the department's work means that we have a decentralised structure with a far-flung network of offices that reinforces the importance of conservation delivery in the field. The department has nearly 1,500 permanent staff, and employs a large number of temporary and seasonal staff and contractors. Thirteen conservancies are located throughout New Zealand (see figure 2 for a map of their locations).

Figure 2: Map of Regions, Conservancies and Areas

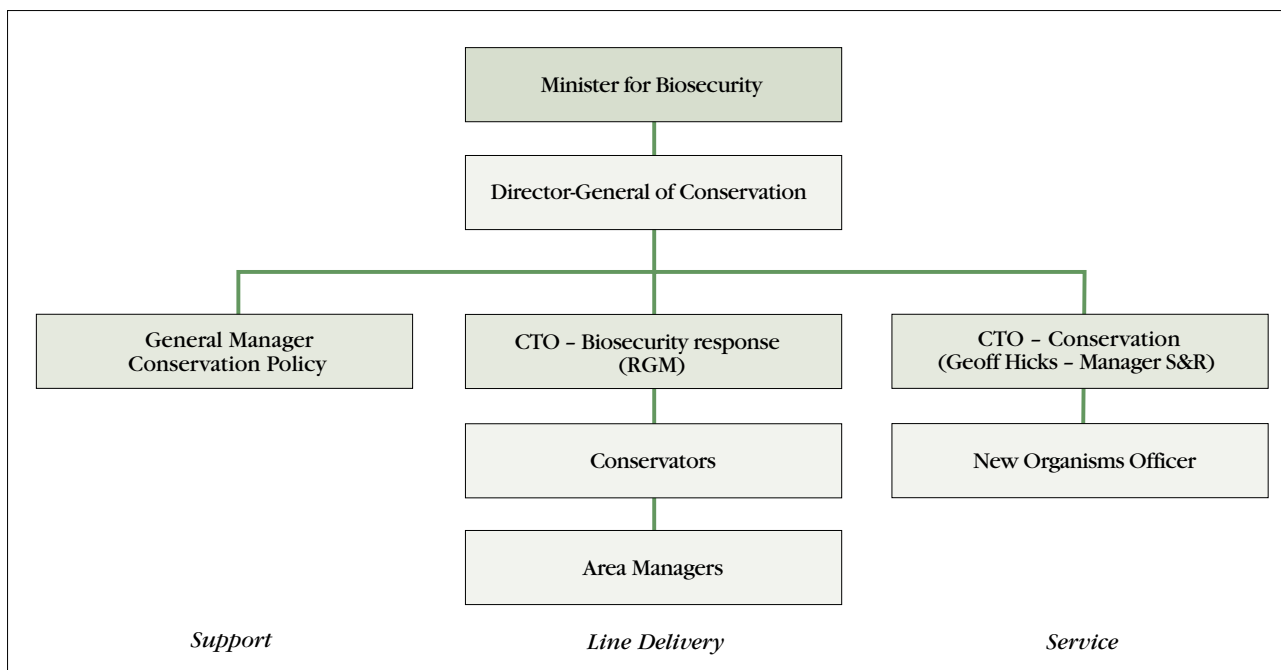


The main role of conservancies is to ensure quality conservation management. Each conservancy has several area offices that deliver conservation outputs. Three regional offices are tasked with continuous quality improvement. The department's head office, based in Wellington, develops national policies, provides leadership and national service and support functions. Figure 4 shows the organisational structure.

*Organisation of biosecurity functions in the Department of Conservation*

The chart below shows the location of staff within the department with key responsibilities for biosecurity.

*Figure 3: Biosecurity functions in the Department of Conservation*



Geoff Hicks is the department's Chief Technical Officer (CTO), for Conservation under the Biosecurity Act. He holds his statutory appointment under warrant from the Director-General and reports directly to him. Geoff is accountable to the Director-General for the following biosecurity activities:

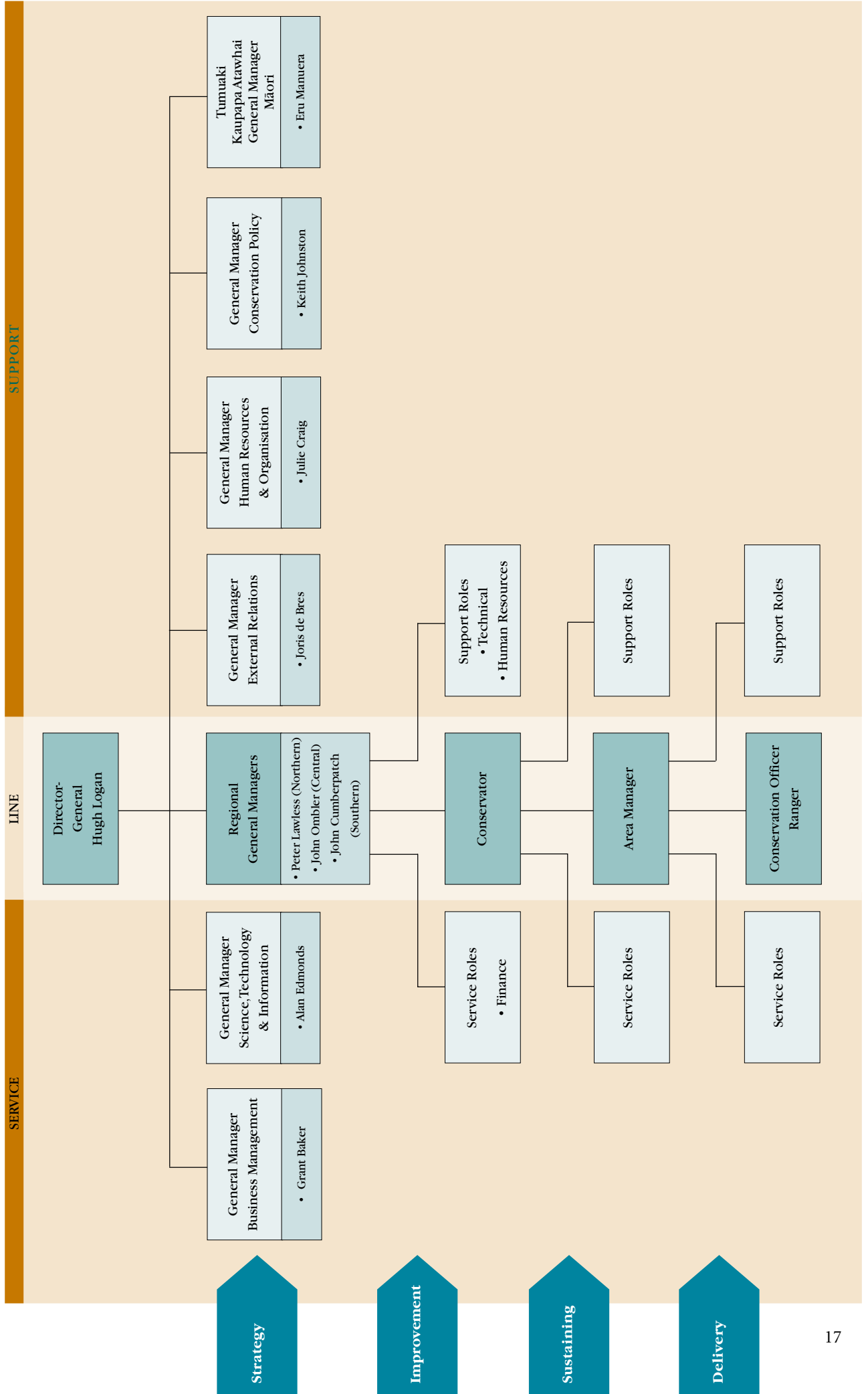
- Identifying biosecurity risks to indigenous flora and fauna;
- Identifying/managing relevant research;
- Declaring organisms unwanted; and
- Delegating powers to CTO-Biosecurity Response positions for internal incursion response.

In the event that a response action is required, the Regional General Manager with operational responsibility in the region of the outbreak will be appointed as CTO - Biosecurity response, for the specific purpose of deploying the response action.

The General Manager, Conservation Policy, is responsible for policy advice on biosecurity issues and provides policy support to the Director-General, CTO-Conservation, and CTO-Biosecurity Response in the event of an incursion.



Figure 4: Department of Conservation - organisation structure



## D PROFILE OF GENERAL MANAGEMENT TEAM AND CHIEF TECHNICAL OFFICER, BIOSECURITY



### **Hugh Logan, Director-General**

Hugh Logan has been the Director-General of the department since 1997. Prior to that he was the Regional General Manager, Central and Conservator for Nelson/Marlborough Conservancy from 1991. During the 1980s Hugh worked in the New Zealand Antarctic Programme, and was director of the Antarctic Division of DSIR from 1988-1991 (the predecessor agency of the then New Zealand Antarctic Institute). Hugh worked in National Parks and Forest Parks in the 1970s, he has a Masters of Arts Degree (First Class Honours) in history from Canterbury University and was awarded a Queen's Service Medal for work on the Mt Erebus DC-10 disaster.



### **Peter Lawless, Regional General Manager Northern**

Peter Lawless joined the department when it formed in 1987 and has been Regional General Manager Northern since 2001. Beginning in 1983 as a freshwater specialist with the Commission for the Environment, he has worked in policy, technical, field delivery and audit roles in the department. The Northern region has 450 staff in five conservancies: Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Tongariro/Taupo.



### **John Ombler, Regional General Manager Central**

John Ombler started working in National Parks in 1975, and joined the department at its inception in 1987. Since then he has been conservator in Whanganui, Hawkes Bay and Auckland, before taking up his present position in 1997 as the Regional General Manager, Central.

The Central Region includes the East Coast / Hawke's Bay, Wanganui, Wellington and Nelson/Marlborough conservancies. There is a small Central Regional Office, supporting the Regional General Manager in Wellington.



### **John Cumberpatch, Regional General Manager Southern**

John Cumberpatch joined the department as Regional General Manager - Southern 1997. He previously worked for Noel Leeming as General Manager - NZ group, and for Firestone NZ Ltd as an Executive Director /General Manager Sales and Marketing.

The Southern Region has 450 staff members in four Conservancies, Southland, Otago, Canterbury, West Coast, and the Regional office in Christchurch.



**Grant Baker, General Manager, Business Management**

Grant Baker joined the department as the Regional General Manager responsible for the Northern region in 1997 and took up his present position as General Manager of Business Management in 2000. His previous background included General Manager positions with Marine & Industrial Safety Inspection Services Limited and Broadcast Communications Limited.

The Business Management Division has 30 staff members in four units (Finance, Business Systems, Legal and National Revenue) and provides financial, business and legal management services to the department and to you.



**Alan Edmonds, General Manager, Science, Technology and Information**

Alan Edmonds is a foundation member of the department, joining its establishment team in 1987 as Deputy Director-General and taking up his present position as General Manager, Science, Technology and Information Services in 1997. He previously managed the QEII National Trust and lectured in biological sciences at Waikato and Lincoln Universities.

Science, Technology and Information Services is an independent unit, not attached to head or regional offices and provides research and technical services, application and database development and information and network services for the whole department. There are 130 permanent and 67 temporary staff in three units (Science and Research, Biodiversity Recovery and Information Management). Some Science and Research staff are located in region and conservancy offices.



**Joris de Bres, General Manager, External Relations**

Joris de Bres joined the department as Public Awareness Manager in 1993, and took up his present position as General Manager of External Relations in 1997. He previously worked for the New Zealand Public Service Association as Assistant General Secretary in Wellington and Regional Secretary for Auckland and Northland.

The External Relations division has 28 staff in seven units (Relationship Management, Treaty Settlements, Public Awareness, Minister's Office staff, New Zealand Conservation Authority, Ministerial Services and Landowner Relations). Joris is currently filling an acting position at Child, Youth and Family. In his absence, Henry Weston is the Acting General Manager, External Relations.



**Julie Craig, General Manager, Human Resources and Organisation**

Julie Craig joined the department as General Manager, Human Resources and Organisation in late 1998, from the Office of Treaty Settlements where she worked as Policy Manager and Chief Crown Negotiator. Previously she worked for a number of years at the State Services Commission where her last role was Branch Manager, Education Sector Group.

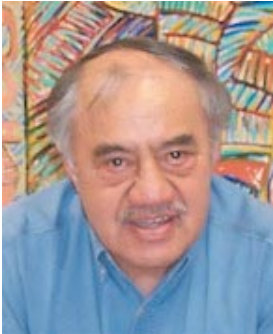
The Human Resources and Organisation Division has 20 staff members in three sections (Strategic Systems, Support and Internal Audit).



**Keith Johnston, General Manager, Conservation Policy,**

Keith Johnston joined the department as Public Awareness Manager in 1989. He joined the Executive Team in 1993 as Executive Manager Strategic Development and in 1999 he became General Manager, Conservation Policy.

The Conservation Policy Division has 14 analysts and one support staff member all reporting to the General Manager.



**Eru Manuera, Tumuaki Kaupapa Atawhai**

Eru Manuera provides strategic advice on Māori issues to the Director-General and General Managers. Eru also provides specific advice on local matters, but generally speaking, advice at this level is provided by the Kaupapa Atawhai Manager, an advisory and management position within each conservancy.

Eru also represents the Director-General at Ngā Whenua Rahui Committee meetings. This is a fund supported by the department, along with the Matauranga Kura Taiao funding initiatives, which are available in the first instance to Māori land owners for covenanting purposes, and secondly to retain traditional Māori knowledge and its use in biodiversity management.



**Geoff Hicks, Chief Technical Officer, Conservation**

Geoff Hicks is the department's Chief Technical Officer, Conservation. Under the Biosecurity Act, he holds a statutory appointment under warrant from the Director-General and reports directly to him. He is also Manager of the Science & Research Unit with 73 permanent and 34 staff nationally and reports in this role to the General Manager, Science, Technology and Information Services.

He joined the Department four years ago and was previously Conceptual Leader of the Natural Environment exhibitions and associated programmes at Te Papa. He has a PhD in marine biology and extensive research experience internationally.